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Operational activities segment

Provisional summary record of the 27th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 9 July 2010, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Cujba (Vice-President) (Republic of Moldova)

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In the absence of Mr. Ali (Malaysia), Mr. Cuba (Republic of Moldova), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation (A/65/39)

(a) Follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly and the Council (A/64/578-E/2010/3; A/65/79-E/2010/76; E/2010/52, E/2010/53 and E/2010/70)

(b) Reports of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme (E/2009/35; E/2010/5, E/2010/6-E/ICEF/2010/3, E/2010/14, E/2010/34 (Part I)-E/ICEF/2010/7 (Part I) and Add.1 and E/2010/36; E/2010/L.7)

1. **The President**, opening the operational activities segment, said that it was the Council's responsibility to keep the United Nations system focused on the development agenda and ensure that it delivered its assistance in the most coherent, coordinated and effective way, bearing in mind the progress made in intergovernmental negotiations on system-wide coherence and the steps that would be taken to improve the governance of operational activities. The specific aim of the operational activities segment was to assess the extent to which the United Nations had improved its development cooperation, in line with the recommendations contained in the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. The reports before the Council showed that considerable efforts had been made to follow up on those recommendations, though progress was insufficient in some areas and further work was needed.

2. Recalling that some hard-won development gains had been undermined by the recent financial and economic crisis, he expressed the hope that governments and other development actors would support the decisions of the forthcoming High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (the "Millennium Summit") to be held from 20 to 22 September 2010, so that progress towards the achievement of the Goals by 2015 could be accelerated.

3. He urged all delegations to engage in informal, frank and open debate throughout the segment. The draft resolution that would be considered under sub-item (a) was in line with the Council's role of providing action-oriented recommendations for the implementation of General Assembly resolutions and would also provide direction for the forthcoming preparations for the quadrennial comprehensive policy review.

4. **Mr. Sha** Zukang (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) said that the operational activities segment was breaking new ground in 2010 by including a larger number of ministers and heads of national development cooperation ministries and organizations in its deliberations, as recommended by the Secretary-General. The support of those ministers and other high-level officials would be vital to building momentum for the Millennium Summit, and to achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

5. Introducing the documents for the segment, he said that the report of the Secretary-General on results achieved and measures and processes implemented in follow-up to General Assembly resolution 62/208 on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (E/2010/70) showed that overall progress had been made in implementing that resolution. The United Nations development system remained a trusted partner in programme countries and provided unique support to national needs in many different ways. Progress had also been made in South-South cooperation and alignment of United Nations development assistance frameworks with national planning processes, as well as in gender equality and women's empowerment. There was, however, a need to review the capacities of some United Nations organizations, especially non-resident agencies, to meet the increasing demand for services. Furthermore, inter-agency staff mobility should be improved and qualified staff deployed more rapidly in crisis and post-crisis countries.

6. The report of the Secretary-General on the functioning of the resident coordinator system, including costs and benefits (E/2010/53) highlighted the improved coherence of country programming and the strengthening of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework mechanisms, while also drawing attention to the strained ability of United Nations organizations to further coordinate their

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programmes and the limited financial contributions made by United Nations organizations to the resident coordinator system.

7. According to the report of the Secretary-General on actions taken by the executive boards and governing bodies of the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies in the area of simplification and harmonization of the United Nations development system (E/2010/52), significant agreements had emerged over the past year within the United Nations Development Group in areas with a direct impact on country-level operations, in such areas as joint funding, common procurement and common information and communications technology services. Reforms in management practice were also now recognized as an important driving force for effective programming.

8. The report of the Secretary-General on analysis of the funding of operational activities for development of the United Nations system for 2008 (A/65/79-E/2010/76) showed that total contributions to the operational development activities of the United Nations system in 2008 amounted to some $22.2 billion, the highest level ever and 10 per cent more in real terms than in 2007. The United Nations system still relied on a very narrow donor base, however, with 10 countries accounting for approximately half of its core budget. The imbalance between core and non-core funding had significantly increased between 1993 and 2008, leading to such difficulties as the fragmentation of resources flows and inefficiencies in terms of transaction costs. The report underscored the need to take a closer look at non-core resources and to make use of new mechanisms to ensure their efficient utilization, particularly in the current period of fiscal austerity. He urged delegations to carefully consider the proposals for strengthening the funding architecture of operational activities for development, since that was crucial to all other aspects of the development agenda.

A panel discussion on the topic of "National ownership and leadership, and capacity development: have they become a reality?" followed, chaired by Mr. Alexandru Cujba (Republic of Moldova), Vice-President of the Council, and moderated by Ms. Solita Monsod (Professor of Economics and former Secretary for Socio-Economic Planning, Philippines). The moderator made a statement and introduced the panellists: Mr. Servacius Likwelile (Deputy Permanent Secretary, Public Finance Management, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, United Republic of Tanzania) and Mr. Ahmed Shide (State Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Ethiopia). The panellists made presentations and responded to comments made and questions raised by the delegations of Belgium (on behalf of the European Union), Cuba, Morocco, Israel, Brazil, Belarus, Kenya, China and Viet Nam. A representative of the Office of Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, responded to questions raised. The moderator made concluding remarks and closed the panel discussion.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.